The Sacramento Observer

Weekly Political Section

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CAPITOL VIEW

DYMALLY: A TOUGH RECORD TO BEAT

by SELMA SPARKS
Political Editor

California's State Senator Mervyn Dymally, (D-L.A.), would become the first Black Lieutenant Governor in American History, if he is successful in November. At present he is the only Black State Senator and the first Black nominee for the state's second highest office.

Dymally has been a member of the Senate for eight years and has been chairman of the Elections and Reapportionment Committee, Vice Chairman of Health and Welfare, Chairman of Select Committee on Children and Youth, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Legal Equality, Chairman of Joint Committee on Revision of Election Code and a member of the Senate's Education Committee.

In these positions Dymally has played a most active role in getting legislation on the books which has been beneficial to women, youth, minorities and the poor.

Dymally's main thrust has been the development of minority leadership.

"I look with pride at the fact that each one of the Black legislators from Los Angeles County has either come from my office or has had his campaign run from my office."

Assemblyman Richard Allatore, one of the Chicano legislators, had the Senator's support prior to his election. At one time he worked for the Senator.

Dymally has also been involved in getting a number of women into politics.

Dr. Louise White, the only Black woman consultant on the Teacher Credential Commission, was at one time on Dymally's staff. A number of young people now working in the legislature as committee staffers were either assigned to Dymally or came out of his internship program which is run to develop young people for positions in the political arena.

"That has been my main thrust, trying to get young people, minorities and women into the political system," said the Senator.

Dymally is head of Project Loophole which investigates tax loopholes of big business, insurance companies, oil companies, banks, etc., with the hope of closing those loopholes.

On this project the Senator has a group of volunteer students doing the research which has been ongoing for three years.

"This is another way for young people to learn about our system and is one way of getting them into the system by doing something which is meaningful and visible," Dymally said.

As a result of this research there have been a number of public disclosures and a great deal of public attention has been focused on the problem of big business tax dodges.

Dymally has had excellent legislation in other areas also. He has been involved in the passage of meaningful legislation for children.

"One bill of which I am very proud is one which introduced the teaching of ethnic history in the California schools."

The passage of this bill, authored by the Senator, made California the first state in the union to pass such legislation. Dymally, who is a former school teacher, is also author of the early childhood education act which is regarded as a major accomplishment.

The equal rights amendment for women was authored by Dymally in his unending battle for the rights of women.

Along these same lines was his bill giving the vote to 18-year-old women.

Dymally's efforts have earned him the reputation in the Capitol as champion of the rights of Mexican-Americans as well. There were no Chicano Senators in the Senate until just recently. And, according to Dymally, there will be another Chicano Senator added next year.

Dymally's major piece of legislation this year was a bill setting up an office of child abuse prevention in California. This becomes law next year and will provide therapeutic assistance to families in crisis. The purpose of this office will be to minimize the incidence of child abuse which is rapidly rising. Under this law, parents can call the office without fear of intimidation by any law enforcement agency. The will be free to seek the help they need. Federal funds will be made available for this program.

According to Dymally, child abuse crosses economic and ethnic lines.

"It's a major problem and not confined to any one race or economic group. Some doctors, lawyers, and other professionals are guilty of it. They can get private professional help while the poor go to jail. This program will change that and provide help for the poor," the Senator says.

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TO LEAD TO LEGISLATION

Medical Care Hearing

The crisis in medical care for the near poor caused by the closing of county hospitals was the topic of a hearing held Aug. 5 in the Capitol by the Senate sub-committee on Medical Education and Health Needs.

As Senator Mervyn Dymally, chairman of the committee, commented after the hearings: "Providing hospital care for the very poor is no longer a problem, Medi-Cal takes care of them. It is the working poor, the 'near poor' who have no place to go." These are the people who are not eligible for Medi-Cal but who cannot afford to pay the high cost of hospital care. These are the people most affected by county hospital closings throughout the state according to testimony given during the hearing.

According to testimony, many of the county hospitals are turning their facilities over to the private sector and the private sector doesn't want to take these 'near poor' people because they don't know who's going to pay the bills.

In the past, county hospitals took care of these borderline poor people but the private sector is not interested in extending care to them out of concern for it's profits according to the reports submitted at the hearing.

A case from Butte County was related where a man was turned away from the hospital because he fit into that borderline category. The man died later due to the lack of immediate medical care.

Here in Sacramento, since the takeover of the Medcal Center by the University of California at Davis, the Center restricted admissions of patients who cannot afford to pay, tightened collection procedures, boosted room rates and turned away maternity patients who can't pay a part of the cost in advance," the hearing was told by a representative of a private medical research group.

Ms. Elinor Blake, of Health Policy Advisory Center, of San Francisco, told the hearing that the center has considered putting cash registers in the outpatient clinics, " . . . to make sure patients pay."

Dr. James Harrison, director of Sacramento County Health Agency, commented, regarding the UC takeover that "We do not have a good feeling about what is happening now."

According to Dymally, the outcome of the hearing will be legislation calling upon the counties to hold hearings and submit a report of their findings to the Dept. of Health before closing their hospitals. "I'm hopeful that more legislation will be coming out next year," added the Senator.

Dymally further commented that "Racial minorities and other low income citizens, chronic alcoholics, chronic psychotics and others with 'undesirable' social characteristics, are simply not wanted in middle-class institutions." This, according to Dymally makes it urgent that state legislation be introduced to provide an alternative to county hospital care for the poor if the county turns it's hospital over to private, profit making institutions.

This was a public hearing and the public was asked to come to give testimony which might have an influence on the strength of whatever legislation proceeds from the hearing.

The Observer Apologizes

THE OBSERVER wishes to apologize to State Assembly Speaker, Leo T. McCarthy, for having given him "a new name" in a photo caption in last week's political edition.

We have already apologized to the Speaker personally, this is just to make it official.

The Editors

Ralph's Bill On Delinquency Prevention

Assemblymen Leon Ralph, has introduced a bill related to Delinquency prevention. Assembly Bill 4051.

The bill authorizes the Board of Supervisors to establish a delinquency prevention agency or department or to assign delinquency prevention duties to an existing agency or department.

Under current law. the Board of Supervisors may, by ordinance, designate one or more county agencies to assist community agencies in delinquency prevention work.

As amended by the Ralph bill, such designaged agencies may engage in activities to prevent juvenile or adult delinquency. This includes providing direct and indirect services to members of the community.

The bill was heard on August 6, and has passed out of the Assembly. It is now in the Senate for consideration.

Joint Committee On Legal Equality Meets

The Joint Committee on Legal Equality is holding a public hearing to explore ways of alleviating the tremendous financial burden placed upon minority women who are heads of households.

Senator Mervyn Dymally, chairman of this committee, reports that more than 5-1/2 million families in the U.S. must depend on women as chief breadwinners yet these women are on the lowest rung of the salary ladder.

According to Dymally, Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor and the only Black in the State Senate, minority families make up 90% of those headed by females. He estimates that 500,000 such families live in California.

The Committee will examine the problem during a day long hearing at the Capitol, Room 4202, on Monday, Aug. 12 starting at 9 a.m. The hearing will tie in with a statewide conference on employment sponsored by the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) shceduled to be held in the State Capitol Aug. 11-15. Miss Dorothy Height, national president of NCNW, is scheduled to testify at the Senate Committee hearing.

"For California and the nation," Dymally pointed out, "the salary inequity plight of minority women means that millions of families are being raised on meager budgets usually not adequate to provide enough food, good housing and adequate clothing. The nation and the state end up paying the economic costs of this salary discrimination."

McCarthy Makes Committee Changes

The new Speaker of the Assembly, Leo T. McCarthy, has made a number of changes within committees. All of the changes may not have been announced but we are listing some of the major changes in important areas.

One major change of importance to Sacramentans is the addition of Z'berg to the Ways and Means Committee. Sacramento now has a representative on the money committee.

Berman, Majority Floor leader;
Dixon, Caucus Chairman;
Wilson, Government Organization;
McAlister, Finance & Insurance;
Deddeh, Employment & Public Employees;
Gonzales, Education;
Foran, Ways & Means;
Miller, Judiciary;
Seeley, Agriculture;
Warren, Energy & Diminishing Materials:
Chacon, Z'berg & B. Greene, Ways & Means;
Ingallo & Papau, Finance and Insurance

Agreement Reached On Mental Health

Assembly Speaker Leo. T. McCarthy announced that, after lenghty negotiations with the Governor, an agreement was reached to restore $18 million in mental health program funds that had been cut from the 1974-75 budget.

Assemblyman Frank Lanterman (R-La Canada) introduce the measure on Aug. 6 and it should be on the Governor's desk in a few days.

A total of $17.4 million had been cut from the Community Health Program budget. Of this amount, $10 million was slated for a cost of living increase to maintain the present level of care for patients through 1974-75.

All of this $10 million will be restored.

A second cut of $7.4 million made in this program was for "after care treatment centers" - that is, care of patients released from a state hospital.

The agreement arrived at was to restore $5.25 million of these funds. This amount will permit the maintance of a high level of "after care" and permit expansion of the program.

In it's 1974-75 budget, the Legislature added 46 million for care of the Developmentally Disabled. These are generally mentally retarded patients but also includes 10 percent in other catergories.

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Dymally: Races Toward Lt. Governorship...

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What made Dymally decide to run for the office of Lt. Governor?

"It was a new option open to us and it's another step forward in breaking the political barriers for minorities," he reveals.

"It will also give me an opportunity to use a larger forum to zero in on some of the problems affecting women, minorities and young people," Dymally adds.

As Lt. Governor, Dymally will be removed from the legislative process but he believes he will have a greater influence on the "body politic" and ". . . there's more to politics than legislation. There are jobs, equal rights, political advancement."

The Lt. Governor sits on the Board of Regents for the University system. He sits on the Board of Trustees for the State College system. He is chairman of the Economic Development Commission which is designed to create jobs and stimulate the economy. He is chairman of the Commission of the Californias.

The Lt. Governor is not merely a figurehead position. Plus, he's Governor if the Governor isn't around.

The Senator has received labor's endorsement of his candidacy as well as the Chicano Caucus endorsement. He also has the support of his Black colleagues in the Legislature.

"I think my chances are good. It will be a good year for the Democrats," expressed the Senator.

In the discussion of some of his committee work, Dymally informed us that the major thrust of the Education Committee for this year and the next will be compliance with the Serrano decision. The Legislature must find a way to provide adequate funding for poor school districts.

"A good example is here in Del Paso Heights which is number-one poor district in the state."

According to Dymally, the other counties don't want to absorb Del Paso because they don't want to take a low tax base into their high wealth district. The Serrano decision says that the manner of funding school districts in California is unconstitutional and " . . . that we have to provide a system of funding which can adequately cover the poor child or the child in any poor district."

Dymally doesn't see anything coming out this year but advises that both houses are preparing legislation for next year.

On being questioned about the voting habits of the Black community Dymally pointed to the Los Angeles election of Mayor Bradley, where the turnout of Black voters was higher than that of white voters.

"When the Black community sees a challenge, it rises to the occasion and gets out to the polls to do what it sees as necessary," asserts Dymally.

Valeria Moffatt, equipped with a wonderful sense of humor combined with a serious attention to business, is secretary to the Manpower Development Committee secretary and the newest member of Assemblyman Greene's office staff which she joined last year.

Her varied duties, handling all hearing tapes, correspondence, mail, answering the regular ringing of the phone, "Keeps this from becoming an ordinary office job and certainly keeps boredom away."

Ms. Moffatt finds the atmosphere of the office condusive to pleasant working hours and, "I find working for Assemblyman Greene a wonderful experience."

Mary Williams, Legislative Secretary to Assemblyman Bill Greene has been on his staff for 2-1/2 years taking care of all legislation in the Assemblyman's office from start to finish.

"That means, from the time of the idea through all the stages until it becomes law."

Ms. Williams, who adds so much to the pleasant atmosphere of this office with her ready smile of welcome, coupled with her apparent ability, also, adds greatly to the efficiency with which the office is run.

Ms. Williamsremarks about her job, "I enjoy my work because it gives me pleasure to watch the legislative process of an idea becoming a law." She also enjoys meeting the many people who pass in and out of the office.

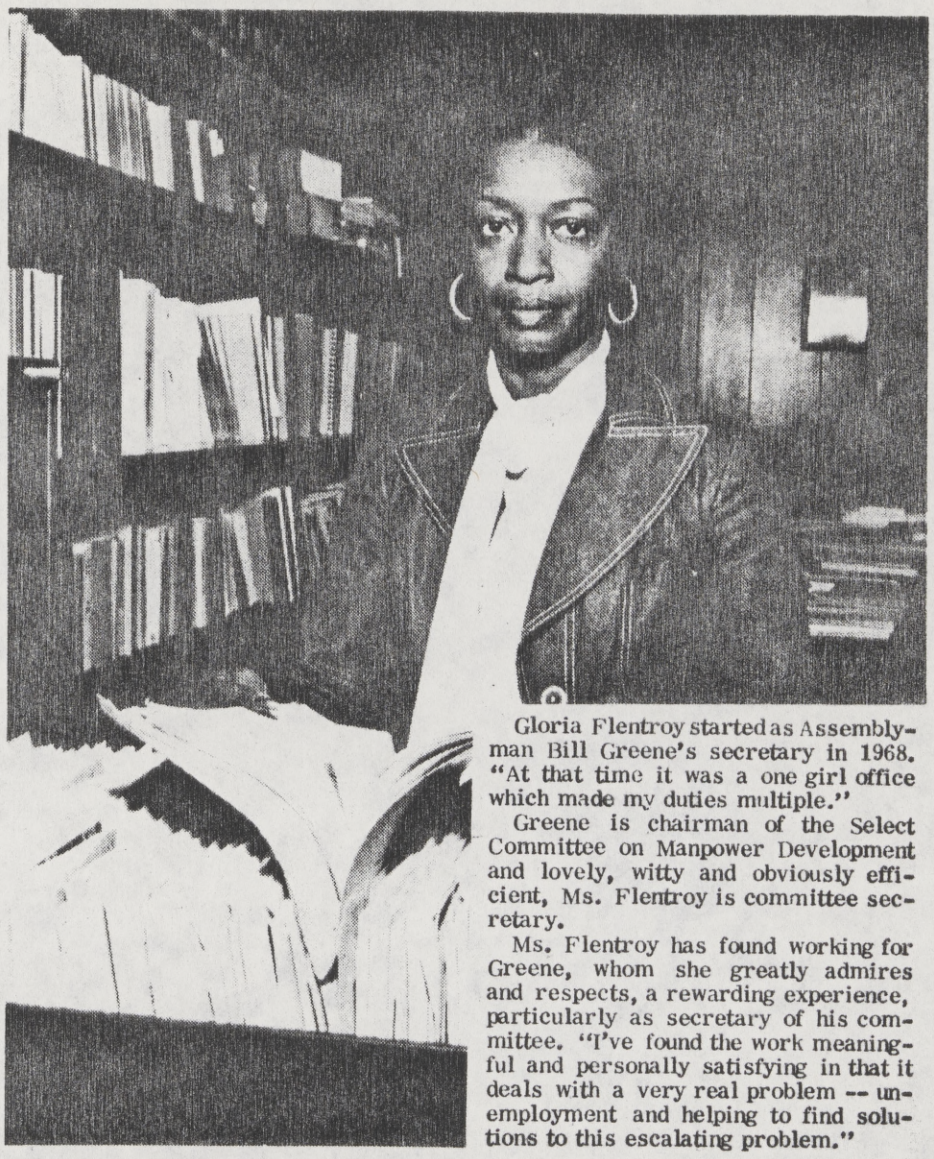
Faces Behind Capitol Desks

Bob Fleming, coordinator for the Select Committee on Manpower Development, is the "thron among roses," he's the only man on Bill Greene's staff.

It is obvious that it takes a very special kind of man to function surrounded by women. Fleming appears to make out all right, because there is no friction in this office. His quiet sense of humor helps him.

Fleming's ideas are best expressed by him. "It cost the U.S. $25 billion to put man on the moon. During this period of great technological advances why don't we use this technology to solve some of the problems of inner space?"

It's unanimous, Fleming, like other members of Green's staff, finds working for him a pleasure and privilege.



Gloria Flentroy started as Assemblyman Bill Greene's secretary in 1968. "At that time it was a one girl office which made my duties multiple."

Greene is chairman of the Select Committee on Manpower Development and lovely, witty and obviously efficient, Ms. Flentroy is committee secretary.

Ms. Flentroy has found working for Greene, whom she greatly admires and respects, a rewarding experience, particularly as secretary of his committee. "I've found the work meaningful and personally satisfying in that it deals with a very real problem -- unemployment and helping to find solutions to this escalating problem."

A CALL FOR 'HUMAN SERVICES'

Coalition Demonstrates In Capitol

Approximately 200 people gathered in front of the West steps of the Capitol Building Monday morning under the nem of the Coalition For Human Services. They represented more than thirty statewide and local organizations.

The demonstration was called out of deep concern " . . . that the dollars removed from the State Budget for 1974-75 will do injury to many citizens and deprive our children of essential services" said Edward Nathan, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Council to the California State Department of Health, in his opening remarks.

Nathan pointed out that he was participating as chairman of the rally as a "concerned citizen," not as a delegate or representative of any official body. He spoke to the problem of funding for the various mental health programs throughout the state. "It would be callous to accumulate a budget surplus of from $250 to $400 million while the human services represented here go unfunded."

The air was filled with signs and sounds, most dealing with the problem of community health programs; mental health, drug abuse, alcoholism and child care. A member of the crowd pointed out that they were here to speak for many who are disenfranchised, patients in mental institutions whose care depends on adequate funding. Also the many who are not technically disenfranchised but who, because of their plight, usually fail to exercise their right to vote. The unhospitalized with severe problems and also children, as yet ineligible to vote.

Dennis Loo, Director of Asian Community Mental Health Services, addressed himself to the needs of the minority community in general, the Asian community in particular. He cited that racist policies had made the need for mental health programs in the minority communities even greater than in other communities yet it was these very communities which would feel the cuts in money most severely. He pointed out the 18% cut in existing community mental health services in Alameda County, a large minority community.

Loo gave a short history lesson by going back 100 years to the anti-Chinese crusade here in California when Chinese were lynched like Blacks were in the South. He emphasized the fact that, far from being the minority with no problems, the Asian community has it's share of problems peculiar to racial minorities in this country.

Loo finished up, " . . . a hundred years later in 1974, it seems that after all the civil rights and all the theoretical enlightenment that should be taking place in relation to the need for pluralism and need to relate culturally, in this day, at this point it really seems to be a step backward with this kind of decision on the cutbacks." Rousing applause rose from the g ing audience.

Shouts of "Yes" and loud vocal agreement and applause followed Assemblyman John Dunlap, (D-Solano County), as he concluded his remarks. "From time to time I've been puzzled during the last seven and a half years. I've wondered, it this administration inept, or is it diabolical? I've decided it's probably at least a little of both."

Later, seeking some reaction from the Governor's office, one of the Governor's top Black Aides was spoken to. "I'm not overly concerned about this demonstration. What they're protesting is not consistant with the facts. Saying the Governor cut $50 million from the people services. The facts don't bear that out. The money is there for mental health."

The Aide continued by explaining that, regarding the legislative recommendations, " . . . it amounts to "can you top this" kind of legislation." He continued by pointing out that each legislator has his own idea about the amount of money which should be spent on any program. " . . . but to say that once they decide that this is the amount of money that should be in the budget and the Governor turns around and says 'no,' that's not to say he's cutting the budget. It's simply not true."

The comments continued with the information that the Governor had blue penciled $17.4 million in the budget that was recommended from ". . . upstaris in the Legislature and that was, well, he only had 48 hours to look at it."

We were informed, as has already been publicized, that the Governor has promised to, " . . . give no less than $10 million in addition to the original mental health budget."

WILLIE BROWN

Bid Again For Speakership?

The question has been raised as to whether Assemblyman Willie Brown will reopen his battle for position of Assembly Speaker which was won by Leo T. McCarthy.

Brown has informed the media that he will not try for a return battle this month. He did not, however, rule out the possibility that he might try for one in December.

McCarthy says he feels "no threat whatever" from Brown "now or in December . . . I feel secure."

Brown indicated he doesn't want to discuss a rematch at this time because he doesn't want to risk blunting he efforts this fall in attempting to assist the Democratic candidates.

Brown will also be campainging for his own re-election and for a measure scheduled for the November ballot which he authored and which would end the requirement of a vote by the people before a public housing project could be constructed.

Brown said he hasn't made an assessment about December but could, at any moment, make the assessment and reopen the battle for the speakership.

Brown hotly denied that he had turned down a offer from McCarthy to be chairman of the Assembly Health Committee.

McCarthy advised that he had gotten the definite impression from Brown that Brown would not accept the chairmanship if it were offered. McCarthy did not reveal what committee he was referring to.

McCarthy had replaced Brown as chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee with Jonn Foran and had removed Brown from the committee altogether.

McCarthy said he was removing Brown from the Ways and Means Committee because he feared that Brown would be too "forceful" on the committee and he wanted Froan to "develop his own role" as chairman.